

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Ittihad Private School - Al Mamzar

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Ittihad Private School - Al Mamzar

Location	Al Mamzar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.ittihadschools.com
Telephone	04-296-6314
Address	P.O. Box 5126, Dubai
Principal	Mrs. Amna Muhammad Rafi
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,746
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	1,468 (84 %)
Date of the inspection	18th to 21st February 2013

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	4
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	13
What happens next?	15
How to contact us	15

The context of the school

The Al Ittihad Private School is situated in Al Mamzar. At the time of the inspection, the school had 1,746 boys and girls on roll, aged three to 18 years. The school was organised into Kindergarten, elementary school (Grades 1 to 5), and girls' and boys' sections for the middle school (Grades 6 to 8) and for the high school (Grades 9 to 12). Most students were United Arab Emirates nationals with smaller numbers of students from other Arab countries. Both Arabic as a first Language learners and Arabic as additional language learners studied Arabic as a first language.

The school followed a US curriculum based on the Connecticut Standards and Common Core State Standards for English and mathematics. Students were entered for external ITBS, TOEFL and SAT examinations, the latter two for Grade 12 only.

At the time of the inspection, there were 122 teachers in the school; they were well qualified and suitably experienced. The school had a history of high teacher turnover although staffing was more stable with fewer substitute teachers. At the time of the inspection there was no school Principal. The school was managed by an acting General Manager from the Al Ittihad School in Jumeirah.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The good progress of students in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- The good progress of students in the high school in all key subjects;
- The good attainment and progress of children in the Kindergarten in mathematics;
- Students' good personal and social development in all phases of the school;
- The good teaching, learning, and assessment in the high school.

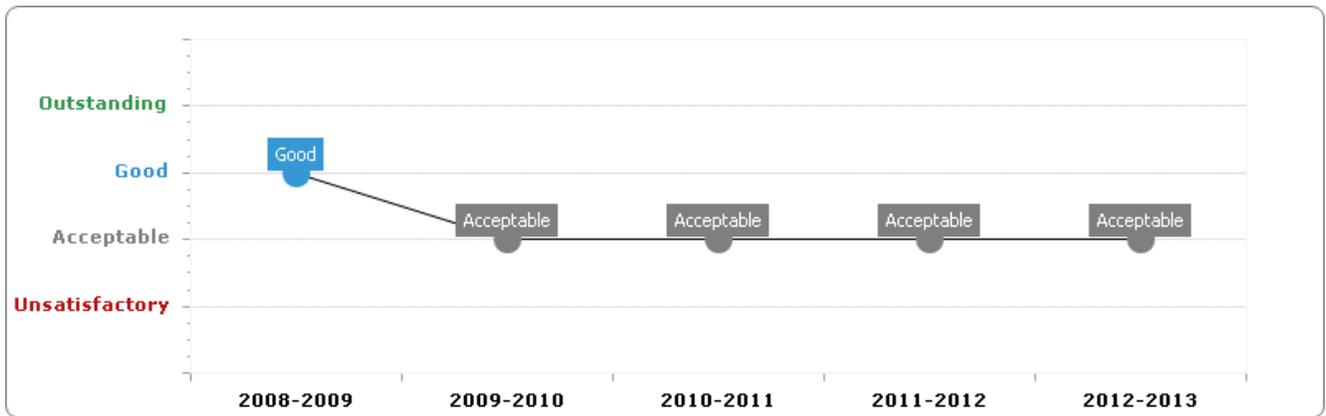
Recommendations

- Ensure that teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum are consistently improved across all subjects and all phases to raise students' attainment in all key subjects;
- Use assessment information more consistently to provide effective support and feedback so that students clearly understand what they must do to improve;
- Make sure that procedures for the health and safety of students are more rigorously applied and regularly monitored, including measures for child protection;
- Ensure that school leaders share the same vision, priorities, policies, procedures and actions to achieve school improvements.

Progress since the last inspection

- There had been improvements in mathematics attainment and progress by children in the Kindergarten and students the high school;
- The attitudes and behaviour of students in the middle school had improved;
- A few improvements in teaching, learning and assessment were evident.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Attainment across the school was variable. It was strongest in Islamic Education and weakest in English and science. Across the school most students had sound knowledge of the key concepts of Islam and memorisation of The Holy Qur'an. Their recitation skills were good. In Arabic, attainment of listening skills was good but the other skills were less well developed. In Arabic as an additional language, students showed good understanding of extended phrases and lengthy sentences. In English, students' achievement in all four language skills was similar but their attainment was better in the high school. In mathematics, the students' capacity to solve problems was improving in the middle school and was good in the high school. In science, students' theoretical knowledge was strong but they showed less capacity in their investigative and practical skills. Their attainment in earth sciences was under-developed.

Progress across the school was variable but was good across all key subjects in the high school. It was strongest in Islamic Education and Arabic, and weakest in English and science. In Islamic Education, most students made good progress in their understanding of the recitation rules of The Holy Qur'an. Arab and non-Arab students were taught together so that non-Arab students made particularly good progress from their starting points. In the Kindergarten, most children made good progress with numbers and shapes, space and measurement. Their developing mathematical vocabulary helped them to explain their understanding. In science, younger students were developing their practical skills. Older students made good progress in understanding scientific theories and concepts.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good across all phases of the school. Almost all students were considerate and polite in lessons and during break times. Students were developing self-reliance toward their education, but many remained too dependent upon adults when beginning their work. Almost all students showed sensitivity and courtesy towards others. However, there were too many students arriving late to school. This had a negative effect upon the assemblies and the start of the school day. Attendance over the last full term was good overall, but slightly lower in the elementary section. Students made good choices about their food and exercise habits. Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness was good. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of Islam in modern society in Dubai. They respected and appreciated Islamic traditions. They could discuss values such as tolerance, honesty and respect towards other people. Students were able to talk about the development of the UAE and identified the features that had changed over time. Students' awareness and understanding of different cultures across the world was less well developed. Students' community and

environmental responsibility was good across the school. The Environmental Club actively planned and completed activities to ensure students were more aware of environmental issues. They made a conscious effort to address these issues in appropriate ways by promoting global environmental awareness and responsibility. Students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 undertook voluntary work as part of their community service programme. Students' demonstrated consideration for others and their capacity as active citizens through their donations to charities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases. It was good in the high school. Teaching quality was too varied in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle stages. Overall, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, created positive learning environments and planned their lessons thoroughly. They ensured that tasks were matched to meet the needs of differing abilities. They used a variety of teaching styles to ensure that groups progressed. Most teachers used questioning well and involved students in self and peer assessment. Lesson objectives and questions were used to focus students on learning and to measure their understanding. The school had involved an outside agency to monitor teaching and deliver workshops to improve it. The school had adapted its own performance management accordingly to include a focus on learning. The effect of this initiative was inconsistent across the school. There were particular strengths in the teaching of Islamic Education, Arabic and mathematics but the teaching of English was too varied.

Learning was acceptable in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases, and good in the high school. Students enjoyed learning but, at times, relied too often on their teachers. Students worked well collaboratively and could present their ideas with confidence. Students needed guidance at times to identify links between their work and real life and to see how new learning connected to previous learning. Students worked more independently as they moved up through the grades, but their use of technology was limited. Critical thinking skills were developed well in the high school. There were weaknesses in students' practical and investigative skills.

Assessment of learning was acceptable in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases. It was good in the high school. There had been a focus on assessment and the introduction of self and peer assessment. The school had introduced the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to measure attainment more accurately. Teachers had secure knowledge of the abilities of their students, which helped them plan for different groups. Feedback to students was inconsistent.

Verbal feedback was more effectively used than written feedback on marked work. There were too few comments to advise students about what to do next to improve.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The curriculum was acceptable in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases and good in the high school. The school's mission was to establish high standards of learning and hold students to them. The curriculum was based upon standards from the United States and the UAE Ministry of Education. A moderate range of subjects was offered to students, including a language course option in the high school. Curriculum review was done by subject, based upon the analysis of assessment information from the previous school year. Modifications were made to accommodate students learning English as an additional language. Overall, curriculum planning provided for appropriate progression for students from year to year. Older students were sufficiently prepared for higher education in almost all subjects. In a few lessons, teachers' planning did not consistently challenge the high attaining students. Provision for students with special educational needs varied, but was acceptable overall. Cross-curricular links were appropriate, but not centrally planned. Opportunities to extend students' literacy skills were limited. The curriculum was enriched with field trips, special events, visitors and a few Advanced Placement courses in the high school.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements to ensure students' health and safety were acceptable across the school. Policies and procedures were in place, and staff members ensured that they were followed. Records were up to date and appropriate risk assessments were completed. Fire drills were regular and effective. Nevertheless, not all students felt safe in school. The school premises, equipment and resources were in good repair but safety checks were not rigorous. Some exits could potentially present a hazard in an emergency. Washrooms were regularly cleaned but not all provided washing facilities. Medical staff carried out regular checks of students' health and well-being. Medication was safely stored and administered by appropriate medical staff. A Child Protection policy was in place, but the understanding of roles and responsibilities amongst staff and students was inconsistent.

Relationships between staff and students were good in almost all areas of the school. Staff members focused on the need for students to arrive at school on time. Systems for monitoring attendance were thorough,

with documentation of those who were late. Attendance was good. Nevertheless, too many students arrived late and missed part or all of the morning assemblies. The well-being and personal needs of students were adequately identified and additional support from specialists was available when required.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Two specialist teachers had developed an identification system for students who had special educational needs. Individual learning needs were accurately identified and clear plans were devised to support each student in meeting their individual targets. These plans involved both parents and students. Students with special educational needs generally made acceptable progress in relation to the targets on their individual plans. A few received in-class support while others received individual support outside the classroom. However, their needs were not written in teachers' plans or evidently addressed in all lessons.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was acceptable. The acting Principal provided determined leadership with the support of her senior leadership team. There had been a few improvements as a result of an appropriate focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning. However, leadership teams were not sufficiently held to account. They had difficulty analysing and interpreting data. The impact of leadership was not adequately evident in terms of improved achievement, even with the provision of external advice, consultancy and support. A number of health and safety issues needed to be addressed.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable, with key priorities identified. All teachers and leaders co-operated in the self-evaluation process. Senior and middle leaders understood the need to bring about school improvement by raising students' achievement levels. However, there was an insufficient overview of whole-school priorities and little consistency about how to raise performance and deal appropriately with weaknesses. Externally supported improvement and action planning were extensive and detailed, but lacked focus. There was no evidence of planning beyond 2013. There had been limited progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. There was an agreed belief that educating children was a shared responsibility between home and school. Parents were able to meet with the acting Principal and her senior leadership team, as well as class teachers regarding any matters of concern. Parents found

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teacher meetings helpful and school reports regular. However, reports did not give enough details on the next steps in students' learning. Community links, including business links and charitable concerns, were well established.

Governance was acceptable. Governors were knowledgeable about the school through regular briefings and visits, but they did not hold the school sufficiently to account for its performance. The governing body had a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They supported and encouraged the acting Principal and her staff in the pursuit of improvement. However, their engagement with parents required further development. More active and visible participation was necessary to ensure that the school continued to improve.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. Staff and students followed routines ensuring that the school ran efficiently. Approximately half of the teachers had a recognised qualification in teaching. One quarter were new to the school. Their experiences were varied. Teachers' professional development was beginning to have an effect upon the quality of teaching. There were specialist teachers to support students with additional needs. Learning areas and specialist facilities were spacious and well-maintained. They were accessible to all students on the ground floor, although there was no lift to the upper floors to facilitate wheelchair access. Resources were plentiful and well-used.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	304	34%
	Last year	244	28%
Teachers	107		78%
Students	246		91%

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Around one third of parents responded to their survey. Most agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects. Most parents confirmed that their children enjoyed school and that they were looked after. Most parents felt that the school was well led but over one quarter of those responding reported that they were not involved in decision-making about the school. Most teachers and senior students responded to their surveys. Almost all teachers confirmed that students were well looked after and kept safe, but a significant minority of students disagreed. Most teachers said that the school was well led but they did not feel that leaders listened to their opinion. Over half of the students disagreed that the school was well led and over a quarter indicated they did not feel looked after or safe.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:
inspection@khda.gov.ae

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